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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

September 9, 2015

Good evening. Please stand for the Presentation of Colors by the Fort Lauderdale Civil Air Patrol Composite Squadron and the City of Fort Lauderdale Police Department Honor Guard.

[Color Guards march in, turn, and dip flags]

Tonight's National Anthem will be performed by Nikki Kidd. I remind all gentlemen to please remove your hats.

[Nikki Kidd performs National Anthem]

Please welcome David Gross, Director of Married People at First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, who will deliver tonight's Invocation.

[David Gross delivers the Invocation]

Please retire the colors.

[Color Guards march out and clear the stage area]

Welcome again to this outstanding new United States Customs and Border Protection Facility at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.

Thanks to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, Banyan Air Service, Jet Runway Café, Sano Aviation and Florida Jet for their tremendous participation and support. Because of the cooperative efforts of these agencies, organizations, and businesses, no local tax dollars are being expended on tonight's event.

Please recognize and thank Randy Bernsen for providing the wonderful jazz music during our reception and Nikki Kidd for her fabulous rendition of the National Anthem.

Thank you, David Gross, for your spiritual guidance and support, as well as your pastoral leadership throughout our community.

Thank you to the young men and women of the Fort Lauderdale Civil Air Patrol Composite Squad who joined with our Fort Lauderdale Police Honor Guard to proudly present our colors and remind us about the importance of patriotism and the selfless contributions of our service men and women.

It is, indeed, appropriate to recognize our first responders, particularly at this time of year. With that in mind, let me remind everyone to join us on Friday, September 11th at 9:30 a.m. at the Fort Lauderdale Fire and Safety Museum for a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony to honor all those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks, commemorate the sacrifices made by our first responders, and remember how this horrific tragedy changed

our lives forever. Again, thank you to our police, fire-rescue and public safety personnel for continuing to serve, protect, and safeguard our neighbors and our community.

It is an honor and privilege for me to recognize and thank the individuals who work for you every day to make this City great, my colleagues on the Fort Lauderdale City Commission: Vice Mayor Robert McKinzie, Commissioner Romney Rogers, Commissioner Dean Trantalis, and Commissioner Bruce Roberts.

Please recognize some special guests who have joined us this evening **[Special guests recognized]**.

Please acknowledge our City staff. Under the leadership of City Manager Lee Feldman, our staff does an exceptional job meeting the needs of our community through prompt, responsive service, and maintaining our high quality of life.

In addition to our City Manager, please recognize our Charter Officers -- City Auditor John Herbst, City Attorney Cynthia Everett, and our Acting City Clerk Jeff Modarelli.

As we know, Fort Lauderdale is fortunate to have some of the hardest working, most talented and involved citizens anywhere. Please recognize and thank all of the members of our Advisory Boards and Committees. You are a dedicated group of volunteers who spend thousands of hours each year advising us on topics ranging from Budgets and Economic Development to Housing and Sustainability. Your expertise and recommendations help guide many of our most important decisions. Again, thank you for your outstanding leadership and service to our City.

Thanks, also, to all of our neighborhood, civic and homeowner association presidents and officers. You are the backbone of our City and we appreciate your hands-on leadership protecting our quality of life and enhancing our community.

Finally, please acknowledge any Veterans who are with us this evening. Thank you for your service to our country and the many sacrifices you make to defend our liberty and preserve our freedom.

It is fitting that we are gathered here at this spectacular new U.S. Customs and Border Protection Facility at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport because this venue is symbolic of the tremendous investments that are being made in our City to modernize infrastructure, advance economic development, stimulate job growth, and strengthen our competitive edge in the marketplace.

As we mentioned earlier at the ribbon cutting ceremony, this facility represents a \$5.7 million investment, of which \$4.9 million has come in the form of a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation. In addition, over the past 15 years, grants from the Federal Aviation Administration have totaled over \$26 million, while the State has awarded this airport with an additional \$5 million in project funding.

These are dollars that could have gone to any number of other communities, but instead, came here to our City, and have enabled us to complete over \$34 million in Airport improvements with only \$2.6 million of Enterprise Fund expenditures. These investments have strengthened operations, improved service delivery, and made a significant impact in terms of job creation, business attraction, and economic expansion.

If fact, according to the latest statewide aviation economic impact study, Executive Airport's total contribution to the local economy now surpasses \$839 million, making it the Number One General Aviation Airport in Florida in terms of total economic output.

There is no doubt that the new Customs facility is an investment that will pay tremendous dividends moving forward, just as the investments we are making today are helping us fulfill our citywide vision for a safe, healthy, active, inclusive, and sustainable community. Our dividends are being seen every day in every corner of our community as we continue to transform Fort Lauderdale into the "City You Never Want to Leave."

Driving our community-wide Vision is the City's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. As the bridge which connects us to our citizenry, the budget is a strategic game plan that allocates the proper resources in accordance with the goals and objectives identified in our Vision and the priorities of our neighbors.

As we put together the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget, Fort Lauderdale received another strong sign of our economic resurgence. The Broward County Property Appraiser informed us that our property values rose 9.68% over last year, marking the fourth (4th) consecutive year of growth. In addition to the gains in property valuation, Fort Lauderdale saw more than \$329 million in new construction added to our tax roll.

I'm proud to report that, last night, for the second consecutive year, the City Commission passed the budget by a unanimous 5-0 vote. This marks the first time since 1999 and 2000 that our budget has passed unanimously in back-to-back years.

The Fiscal Year 2016 budget calls for **NO INCREASE** to the City's current operating millage rate and **NO INCREASE** to the fire assessment fee. The millage rate for fiscal year 2016 will remain at its current level of 4.1193 per \$1,000 of taxable value. This represents the ninth (9th) consecutive fiscal year that the City Commission has held the line on property taxes.

Our millage rate and our water and sewer rates remain among the lowest in Broward County.

Our budget provides us with the resources to deliver quality, cost effective services to our neighbors while investing in social capital to build community, expand civic engagement, and enhance quality of life. It calls for continued investments to maintain and strengthen our infrastructure, enhance citywide public safety, bolster direct service delivery, enrich programming in parks and recreation, and replace and upgrade critical fire-rescue equipment and apparatus.

A five-year Community Investment Plan will appropriate over \$440 million in 255 infrastructure projects including roads, sidewalks, water lines, drainage systems, wastewater systems and City facilities.

As a result of our conservative fiscal management, lean process improvements, and operational efficiencies, we are projecting an almost \$57 million reserve fund balance, which is above our adopted policy and exceeds the national standard for municipal governments.

Fort Lauderdale's strong fund balance, along with our low debt load, enhances our bond ratings, saving residents and businesses millions of dollars in interest costs and strengthening our long-term financial stability.

In fact, in June, Standard & Poor's raised the City's General Obligation Bond rating to AA+. According to S&P, and I quote, "The rating reflects our opinion of Fort Lauderdale's strong budgetary performance and very strong budgetary flexibility and liquidity..."

Ultimately, our budget represents a collective investment in our City's future. While the Vision embodies our shared goals, ideas, and aspirations, the budget is the vehicle that allocates the necessary resources to achieve those objectives.

Tonight, we highlight many of the projects and initiatives taking place today to enhance quality of life and benefit the generations of tomorrow.

Our vision calls for investments in connectivity, and together, we are meeting the challenge.

Tremendous progress is being made on several game changing initiatives that promise to redefine Fort Lauderdale's future including the Wave Streetcar that will enhance mobility and stimulate transit-oriented development throughout downtown; the \$2.5 billion All Aboard Florida high speed passenger rail project which is coming out of

the ground just west of City Hall; and more than \$70 million in upgrades and enhancements to Fort Lauderdale Beach.

We've taken numerous steps to activate our Riverwalk including launching the tremendously popular Water Trolley, the new food kiosks, enhanced recreational opportunities, and passage of ordinances to allow street performers, artists, and outdoor dining along our picturesque New River.

To top it off, earlier this summer, we received word that Fort Lauderdale was selected as a site for a Levitt Pavilion. The proposed new venue would be located at Esplanade Park and funded through grants and private donations. This exciting opportunity will bring a new level of entertainment, activity, and cultural offerings to the Riverwalk, while helping us fulfill our shared community vision of creating a vibrant, engaging, downtown destination for neighbors and visitors.

In addition to the projects taking place downtown, our City is benefiting from the roaring economic engines of Port Everglades and Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport. The Port is generating \$28 billion a year and the airport's economic impact tops \$13 billion.

In its first year, the new \$73 million FEC Intermodal Facility at Port Everglades helped boost rail freight by 26%.

The Florida Department of Transportation has over \$167 million in road improvements currently underway in the City including several bridge replacements and the high-profile reconstruction and beautification of A1A from Sunrise Boulevard to NE 18th Street.

If you haven't seen that area of the beach lately, I encourage you to take a look. The raised roadway, new wave wall and brick walkways are a beautiful work in progress. Thank you to our partners at FDOT and the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization for their leadership and commitment toward making these major infrastructure investments that will strengthen our resiliency for years to come.

As we endeavor to become a truly pedestrian friendly, multi-modal community, our Transportation and Mobility Department is leading the way with progressive initiatives including: the Connecting the Blocks Painted Intersection Project, which brought unique artwork to our downtown intersections to calm traffic and enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety and will now be expanded to Fort Lauderdale Beach; the Downtown Walkability Plan which is making improvements on Las Olas Boulevard and ancillary arteries; the Uptown Link Shuttle, which is providing alternative transportation to the Cypress Creek corridor; numerous bike lanes, greenways, sharrows, and complete streets projects that are making our roadways safer and more accessible for all users; and the upcoming launch of Vision Zero, a nationwide safety effort to significantly reduce traffic related injuries and pedestrian fatalities.

Our Vision plan aims for a prosperous City with a vibrant and diverse economy that transcends our famous, sunny climate. And, together, we are meeting the challenge.

Today, there are over 16,100 building permits pending in Fort Lauderdale, valued at over \$1.3 billion, up 64% over last year.

The Building Division has added 11 new positions and created an "Express Lane" to provide faster service for small projects. Nearly 26,000 building permits were issued and over 97,000 inspections were conducted. Development in our City is booming. Currently, there are 5,463 residential units and hotel rooms under construction, approved or in the review process in our downtown area, and an additional 2,403 units in various stages of development on Fort Lauderdale Beach.

This impressive level of private investment is sending a clear signal of strength and confidence about Fort Lauderdale's future.

While infrastructure investment is on the rise, unemployment remains low. Our current unemployment rate of 5.2% continues to trend as one of the lowest in the State, and lower than Miami and the State of Florida.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau have all played pivotal roles in our City's dramatic economic resurgence.

Here in the Uptown Corridor, which is often called Fort Lauderdale's second downtown, there are also stories of great success.

This area continues to be one of Fort Lauderdale's largest employment hubs, one of our City's strongest economic engines, and one of our fastest growing areas for business, leisure, and entertainment.

In addition to Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, Uptown is home to major employers including: Citrix, Microsoft Latin America, Zimmerman Advertising, Nipro Diagnostics, CBS Interactive, Sanford-Brown Institute, Diversified Realty Development, Kaplan University, Keith & Schnars, Workforce One, Midgard Management, Calvary Chapel, Miller Legg, Greenspoon Marder, Broward MPO, and many others.

Working cooperatively with the City, our Airport, and Envision Uptown, business owners have embraced long-term plans to transform this area into an urban neighborhood featuring offices, retail, residences, parks and public plazas.

Highlighting the master plan for this area will be the Schlitterbahn Water Park, which will be located right across the street. The City recently cleared a major hurdle when the FAA agreed to let us purchase the property that will house the 64-acre world class water park from Executive Airport. As Schlitterbahn principal Jeff Henry described it, the project will be "the biggest and baddest park we've ever built," featuring groundbreaking technology not seen in any of their other parks. The project will also include the addition of four soccer fields for use by the community, as well as the renovation of Lockhart Stadium which will remain home to our fabulous Fort Lauderdale Strikers. Our City's professional soccer team continues to grow and develop under the new ownership group, and it will only be a matter of time before they bring home a championship.

While we are talking about Uptown, how about an outstanding business located right here at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport. Banyan Air Service, which provides a wide range of aviation, maintenance, repair, and aircraft sales and services, was just voted the #1 Fixed Based Operator in the Southeast United States in the 2015 Pilots' Choice Awards. Under the leadership of Don Campion, the company also ranked #5 among all FBOs in the United States. Congratulations to all our friends at Banyan on this outstanding achievement!

While Uptown Fort Lauderdale is bustling, activity is just as brisk on Fort Lauderdale Beach where a building boom is underway in the Birch Street neighborhood. Rebranded as North Beach Village, the privately funded initiative includes the renovation of 35 structures, many of which are being transformed into boutique resorts catering to tourists from all over the world.

To the east of North Beach Village, preparations are nearly complete for the 290-room Conrad Fort Lauderdale Resort on the site of the former Trump property. The 24-story condo-hotel project is undergoing more than \$34 million in upgrades including a spa, swimming pool, and exclusive oceanfront dining.

Just up the street, the former Howard Johnson's site is being redeveloped as the Paramount Fort Lauderdale Beach, an upscale development that will feature 95 oceanfront residences.

Further south, Bahia Mar is proposing two 39-story condominium towers, a \$40 million hotel renovation and an exhibition center, along with an Intracoastal Waterway promenade, waterfront restaurants, a retail-oriented "fishing village," and a grocery store.

Finally, the Hyatt Pier 66 completed a major renovation project, which included a complete overhaul of its entire marina.

All of these projects will continue to enhance Fort Lauderdale Beach, while strengthening our position as a “must see” vacation destination.

Our vision calls for investments to make us the most resilient community in the nation, and, together, we are meeting this challenge.

Fort Lauderdale’s long-term sustainability is inherently linked to our environment and, specifically, to the water that surrounds us.

This past summer, Fort Lauderdale launched the nation’s first climate and resiliency training program for every City employee. The program called “Climate 101,” has reached over 1,700 City employees who are committed to preparing for, addressing, and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Please recognize and thank Assistant City Manager Sue Torriente, who, unfortunately, will be leaving us next week to become the Assistant City Manager and Chief Resiliency Officer for the City of Miami Beach. Under Susy’s visionary leadership, Fort Lauderdale adopted a new and sustainable way of doing business that has improved City operations, strengthened our community, enhanced neighbor quality of life, and positioned us as a global leader at the forefront of sustainability and climate resiliency.

Building upon our leadership in this area, Fort Lauderdale became one of the first municipalities in Florida to adopt and incorporate Adaptation Action Area policies into our Comprehensive Plan. These policies will enable us to identify and prioritize areas most vulnerable to sea level rise and coastal flooding and implement adaptation measures to reduce the damaging effects of climate change. Our efforts will serve as a model for other Florida cities as we work together to formulate regional solutions to enhance sustainability and strengthen resiliency.

We continue to update our transportation fleet and equipment, focusing on fuel efficiency, ultra-low emissions, and more hybrid vehicles. Again, leading by example, the City recently replaced old, inefficient vehicles with 26 new hybrid vehicles. Our fleet staff earned national recognition for new internal procedures that track fuel use, idling, and vehicle performance to minimize waste and maximize efficiency. Fort Lauderdale now ranks #36 among the 100 Best Fleets in the Americas.

The City’s comprehensive Environmental and Sustainability Management System, better known as ESMS, is integrating sustainable management practices and employee safety procedures into our daily operations. The initiative has trained close to 250 community builders in areas including energy and water conservation, pollution prevention, waste reduction, and natural resource protection.

Just a few weeks ago, our Fleet Fenceline area and our George T. Lohmeyer Wastewater Treatment Plant both passed comprehensive ESMS external audits and have been officially certified as meeting the stringent guidelines from the International Organization for Standardization for reducing our environmental impact and maximizing operational efficiency.

In addition to ESMS, a new citywide strategic management system is helping City departments collaborate with one another to identify and address community priorities while enhancing accountability, transparency and measured results through performance management and process improvement.

This initiative also follows guidelines established by the International Organization for Standardization. Currently, we are in the process of integrating this system throughout our entire organization and we hope to become the first City in the country to achieve ISO 9001 certification following our external audit in January.

While Fort Lauderdale continues to enhance internal operations, our neighbors are embracing many external programs and initiatives, including our commitment to waste diversion. Already this year, a record 984 neighbors have seized the opportunity to divert 83,657 pounds of hazardous waste and electronics from improper and illegal disposal.

We also launched a new program that provides curbside pick-up of used vehicle tires. Reuse and recycling of used tires provides environmental and economic benefits. From football fields and playground safety mats to rubberized asphalt and tire derived fuel, old tires are being repurposed for a variety of uses.

The City adopted the Florida Friendly Landscape Ordinance. To help reach our tree canopy goal, the City continues to host free tree give-away events, providing almost 3,000 trees annually to our neighbors. The next tree give-way is set for this Saturday, September 12th at Osswald Park from 8:00 am to noon.

As many of you are reminded on a daily basis, we continue to make investments in our infrastructure by improving roads, renovating bridges, and enhancing our water and sewer systems.

Our Public Works staff along with our Distribution and Collection Division have successfully operated, repaired, and maintained systems that include over 750 miles of water mains, more than 30 raw water wells, over 18,000 water valves, nearly 6,000 fire hydrants, over 57,000 water meters, over 10,000 sanitary sewer manholes, 900 force main valves, and more than 150 wastewater pumping stations.

While we are thankful that Tropical Storm Erika did not visit us a few weeks ago, I am pleased to report the City was and remains ready should the need arise to activate our emergency operations plan.

Throughout the year, City staff receives emergency operation training and reviews procedures and protocols. This year, our departments and divisions received special training on FEMA emergency response requirements to increase awareness of federal disaster guidelines and regulations, while remaining vigilant in every aspect of emergency preparedness.

Our vision calls for investments to make us a safe, healthy, friendly and close knit community. Together, we are meeting the challenge.

Under the leadership of Police Chief Frank Adderley, Fort Lauderdale has the lowest number of crimes documented in our City since the Police Department began tracking crime statistics in 1974.

The Police Department's innovative community building efforts were recognized by the Florida League of Cities when the organization presented FLPD with the 2015 Citizenship Award. This statewide accolade commended the department for its Community Police Forum, an initiative that raises awareness about the department and provides opportunities for the police to interact, engage, and develop productive partnerships with neighbors, organizations, and stakeholders.

In addition to enhanced community outreach, we are expanding our successful mounted patrol program, increasing our police presence throughout our neighborhoods, and continuing our partnership with IBM to utilize predictive analysis software to stay one step ahead of criminals.

The Smartwater program, which started in South Middle River, has been expanded to the Lauderdale Manors, South Middle River Terrace, and Middle River Terrace neighborhoods. The initiative continues to be an effective theft deterrent while helping police link suspects to specific crimes.

As one of the busiest Fire-Rescue departments in the state, Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue responded to over 51,900 calls last year, up substantially from the 44,000 calls responded to a year earlier.

The department also provided “Hands Only CPR” training to over 7,600 neighbors.

Last month, our Fire-Rescue Department became one of only 32 departments out of 47,000 nationwide to achieve both a Class 1 rating from the Insurance Service Organization and national accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. These two accomplishments speak to the quality of our fire and emergency services. The ratings reflect outstanding fire protection efforts in the areas of equipment, staffing, communications, water distribution, community risk reductions, and fire alarm facilities, and will help reduce fire insurance premiums for both homeowners and commercial properties.

In addition, Fire Marshal Jeff Lucas earned certification from the Center for Public Safety Excellence, becoming one of only 93 Fire Marshals worldwide to attain this professional accreditation.

Congratulations to the entire department on these outstanding achievements!

Fort Lauderdale is proactively involving our neighbors in the community building process, promoting volunteerism, and enhancing neighborhood communications. Over 1,400 volunteers worked on 53 community service projects this year.

Over 100 volunteers painted, cleaned, and landscaped four blighted properties as part of the Adopt-a-Neighbor program.

Volunteers built 14 “Little Free Libraries” for local parks and community centers.

In partnership with The Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, we once again hosted Neighbor Support Night, to strengthen community ties, elevate public spirit, and encourage citizen engagement.

Special events are an integral part of our vision to enhance quality of life, generate international exposure for Fort Lauderdale, and strengthen our position as a premier destination for travel and tourism.

We hosted 40 major citywide events with more than 600,000 in attendance, including the St. Patrick’s Parade and Festival, Great American Beach Party, Fourth of July Spectacular, and New Year’s Eve Downtown Countdown.

More than 50 additional special events were held at Riverwalk, 25 at the beach, and Downtown’s FAT Village continues to offer Art Walk, Night Owl Market, Food in Motion, and numerous other inspiring events that showcase many of the City’s most creative and artistic talents.

This has been a banner year for tourism and our special events have certainly played an important role in attracting visitors.

Last year, Greater Fort Lauderdale welcomed a record 14.3 million visitors who spent \$11.4 billion. This year, we are on pace to eclipse that record and continue our run of 68 consecutive months of tourism growth.

We are currently having our best summer on record and the prospects for the remainder of the year look excellent as we welcome the 56th Annual Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show in early November and finish the year strong with the 2015 Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade.

On the technology front, the City launched a new website and sustainability portal, both of which showcase our vibrant community and the quality services and initiatives we provide to our neighbors.

We are excited to share the news that the City of Fort Lauderdale website won the 2015 Best of the Web Award from the Center for Digital Government. In an announcement last week, our site was recognized for functionality, fostering civic engagement, and providing users with rich and dynamic content. The City won praise for “a modern

look and feel, increased opportunities for engagement and improved navigation.”

Congratulations to our Information Technology Division and our Public Affairs Division for their leadership in making our website among the nation’s best and most visited.

We are truly becoming a more connected City as the number of subscribers to our social media tools has increased by 700% for Twitter, 396% for YouTube, and 340% for Google Plus.

Fort Lauderdale’s leadership position continues to generate national media attention for our City. I encourage everyone to visit our award winning website where you will find close to 50 top rankings for outstanding initiatives in economic and business development, sustainability, transportation and mobility, technology, recreation, travel and leisure, and quality-of-life.

Our outstanding awards and recognitions include:

- National Civic League “All-America City”
- Top 10 Best Downtowns
- Top 10 Most Exciting Places in Florida
- Top 10 Most Exciting Mid-Sized Cities in America
- Top 10 American Dream Cities
- Top 10 Greenest Mid-Sized Cities
- Top 10 Best Cities for Millennial Job Seekers in Florida

and many, many more.

These accolades serve as an important reminder that our greatest achievements have and will continue to be accomplished together.

By all accounts, the City of Fort Lauderdale is right on track, and the state of our City is strong!

As night falls on this outstanding new facility, and we look forward to new and exciting opportunities that lie ahead, we remain optimistic about our future, we remain committed to leaving no neighborhood behind, and we remain passionate about working cooperatively with all of you to make Fort Lauderdale the best place to live, work, play, visit and raise a family.

Thank you. May God Bless you, and our great City of Fort Lauderdale.